

## University of Groningen

### Foreword

Lowie, Wander

*Published in:*  
Modern Language Journal

*DOI:*  
[10.1111/modl.12607](https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12607)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Lowie, W. (2020). Foreword: A Human Ecological Language Pedagogy . *Modern Language Journal*, 104(S1), 5-6. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12607>

#### Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

#### Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.*

# Foreword

IT IS A GREAT HONOR TO INTRODUCE THE PRESENT *MLJ* MONOGRAPH AS THE supplemental issue in Volume 104. In *A Human Ecological Language Pedagogy*, Glenn Levine has managed to create a holistic framework for language teaching and language learning that aligns with contemporary postmodern, dynamic, and multilingual theories. Building upon existing standards frameworks, such as the ACTFL *Standards* and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Levine offers a comprehensive perspective based on fundamental components of a contemporary language education in today's increasingly diverse and mobile educational environments. At the core of this language pedagogy are the complex interconnections between local and global contexts, the engagement of human creativity, the imperative for social justice, and the fostering of compassion. To allow for the inclusion of many different dimensions of language learning and language teaching, Levine identifies Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) as the optimal metatheoretical framework to account for the interactive constructivist epistemology he proposes. However, different from previous teaching applications that tend to emphasize the similarities between CDST in cognition and the physical world, *A Human Ecological Language Pedagogy* takes a strongly ecological perspective, in which human interaction takes a central position. This signifies that Levine's pedagogy corroborates the commensurability of CDST and Sociocultural Theory. Although both theoretical approaches have shown spin-offs to language teaching, for neither of the theories a fully developed set of pedagogical implications had yet been accomplished. And this is exactly what we find in *A Human Ecological Language Pedagogy*.

Not only the theoretical foundation of the book is profound and innovative, the timing of the book is also very appropriate. While many approaches to language teaching may still be based on assumptions of foreign language learning in traditional classroom situations, today's language learning context is in an ongoing transition in two major ways. The availability of online opportunities for authentic language contact, from gaming to social media, has transformed the context of language learning, inside and outside of the classroom. This change requires a new language pedagogy to accommodate teaching in the 21st century. And in addition to the change in the learning context and the opportunities for learning, a change affecting our perspective on language teaching is the changing type of learners. Due to the massive human migration (voluntary or forced) of people around the world, a new and urgent context for language learning and teaching has emerged. This has led to more and more diverse instructional settings than we have seen in recent history, which requires a new framework of language pedagogy, centered on present-day descriptions like *multilingualism*, *translanguaging*, and *affordances*. In Levine's monograph, L2 learning is not only defined as an instrumental means to a communicative end, but is seen as what he refers to as a "dynamic framing of identity" (Kramsch, 2009).

I am convinced that the present monograph adds the critical dimension that is urgently required for a comprehensive conceptual framework and that the guidelines that the book provides are indispensable for the practice of language instruction in the 21st century. The new *standards* presented in Levine's monograph offer the supplementary requirements for a fully dynamic pedagogy, starting from the observation that the fundamental function of language is its usage in social and cultural interaction, and in which meaning making is not seen as a static entity, but as a continuous and dynamic process. Following these principles, Levine's contribution is a worthy tribute to the work of Leo van Lier, which

served as a conceptual foundation for the monograph. *A Human Ecological Language Pedagogy* will be a valuable contribution to the research community interested in contemporary approaches to language teaching, but also a rich source of inspiration for today's language teachers.

Wander Lowie,  
Monograph Series Editor